



Oconto Electric Cooperative Sponsors Local Students to Attend Youth Leadership Conference

Students explore cooperatives, leadership skills at Co-ops Yes! event

Three local high school students learned about cooperatives and honed their leadership skills at Cooperative Network's annual Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership Conference in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, March 4–5.

The Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership Conference teaches high school students about cooperatives and leadership through presentations, case studies, and networking with co-op professionals.

Motivational Speaker Craig Hillier returned with his interactive and inspiring message on “breakthrough leadership,” helping students identify their leadership styles and learn how to work as a team to achieve their goals. Students also enjoyed a formal banquet followed by hypnotist Al Snyder.



Madelyn Kaminski, Elizabeth Ausloos, and Samantha Coron attended Co-ops Yes! Conference. Madelyn said, “I met new friends and also looked at life from new/different perspectives, which you don’t get a chance to do every day!”

DAY OR NIGHT, WE ARE READY TO ANSWER THE CALL

Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 8

National studies consistently rank power line installers and repairers among the most dangerous jobs in the country, and for good reason. Laboring high in the air wearing heavy equipment and working directly with high voltage create the perfect storm (677607) of a dangerous and unforgiving profession. But electric lineworkers are up to the task. These brave men and women are committed to safety, as well as the challenges of the job.

OEC’s linemen are responsible for keeping power flowing day and night, regardless of national holidays, vacations, birthdays, weddings, or other important family milestones. Beyond the years of specialized training and apprenticeships, it takes internal fortitude and a mission-oriented outlook to be a good lineworker. In fact, this service-oriented mentality is a hallmark characteristic of lineworkers. The job requires lineworkers to set aside their personal priorities to better serve their local community.

Family Support System

To perform their jobs successfully, lineworkers depend on their years of training, experience, and each other to get the job done safely.

Equally important is their reliance on a strong support system at home. A lineworker’s family understands and supports

their loved one’s commitment to the greater community during severe storms and power outages.

This means in times of prolonged outages, the family and their lineworker may have minimal communication and not see each other for several days. Without strong family support and understanding, this challenging job would be all the more difficult.

Thank You

Monday, April 8 is Lineworker Appreciation Day. Given the dedication of OEC’s linemen, both on and off the job, I encourage you to take a moment and acknowledge the many contributions they make to our local community. And if you see their family members in the grocery store or out and about in the town, please offer them a thank you as well.

Brian Arndt (Journeyman Lineman) Employee Since 1997
Scott Bancroft (Journeyman Lineman) Employee Since 2012
Ron Friedman (Journeyman Lineman) Employee Since 1999
John Havemeier (Line Foreman) Employee Since 1989
Tyler Schroeder (Journeyman Lineman) Employee Since 2012
Ben Wilcox (Journeyman Lineman) Employee Since 2007
Kevin Thomson (Equipment Operator) Employee Since 1997



NO FOOLIN': APRIL IS SAFE DIGGING MONTH

Spring showers bring May flowers, but digging on your own this spring could spell big trouble. Even if you think you could get lucky or that digging one small hole (or two) won't matter, don't take for granted what lines might lurk beneath the soil in your yard or easement.

Before you use that post hole digger or other unearthing tools, STOP and call 8-1-1 to request that buried electric, gas, cable, and other live lines in or near your yard be marked. The service is free but digging in an unmarked yard may not be.

You might think you don't have time for that and ask yourself, *what's the worst that could happen?*

YOU COULD DIE OR BECOME SERIOUSLY INJURED.

It doesn't make that yard project quite as pressing, does it?

Other consequences of blindly digging and taking a chance? You could cause a power outage. You could hit a gas line and get burned or cause an evacuation in your neighborhood. You could be fined. If you hit a telephone line or fiber optic line, you might lose your telephone, cable TV, or internet service. Worse yet, it could interfere with your neighborhood's emergency assistance technology.

Although it all seems like "your" yard, utilities have the

right of way to the live lines lurking under the ground in places where you might dig. In fact, an underground utility line is damaged once every six minutes across the nation because someone decided to dig without getting their yard properly marked, according to data collected by Common Ground Alliance. You may think digging a hole won't matter, but that's what the person thought who hit a line six minutes ago.

Take a deep breath, look over your landscaping or fence plans, and call 8-1-1 before you dig. Each state has its own call center to help you get digging safely. By calling 8-1-1, utilities or the companies they contract with will come to your home and mark your yard before you dig.

The utility safety organization, Safe Electricity, reminds you that call811.com lists the name and contact information for each state's digging notification service. The site also lists the advance notice required for marking services, which is usually two days, not including the day you call.

So tiptoe through the tulips this spring and summer, both literally and figuratively. Know what's underneath that flower bed and everywhere else in your yard.

As call811.com says, "Know what's below." Then dig safely. For more about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



SAFETY FOR SENIORS AT HOME



MainStreet Messenger allows seniors to be safe while being independent and living at home.

- You're never really alone with this personal emergency response program
 - Help is only moments away with push of a button
 - Installation within days

PEACE OF MIND FOR ONLY A DOLLAR A DAY!



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Sold Out! Employee Fundraiser was a Huge Success

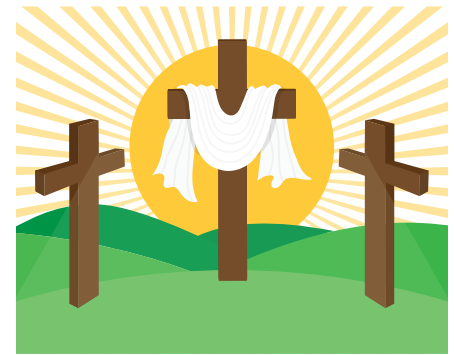


OEC's Employee Charity Bag Lunch to Go was a huge success again! We would like to thank all the businesses in the area that ordered and the individuals who stopped at the office.

The kitchen crew assembled 460 sandwiches this year, which resulted in selling out again for the second year in a row.

We continue to increase our supplies each year knowing that the word is out on just how good this lunch is! Don't worry, next year we will be increasing that number again.

The fundraiser made over \$2,300 for the 2019 charities, which are Oconto County Armored Emergency Vehicle and Commission on Aging, Inc. Home Delivery Meals program. (343301)



**OEC will be closed
April 19 to observe
Good Friday**

HAPPY EASTER!

**National Work Zone
Awareness Week is
April 8-12**

Please slow down in work zones. Drive like you work there.

Be alert and stay off of your mobile phone.

MY CO-OP

Clean up your paper clutter !



You can clean up your paper clutter by signing up for paperless billing through SmartHub. While you're there, check out the other great benefits SmartHub has to offer:

- Pay your bill online
- Check your usage
- Manage your account
- Set up recurring and stored payments
- Communicate directly with the co-op

Sign up for SmartHub online. It's Oconto Electric's FREE and mobile online payment system. Click on the manage your account link and follow the prompts to create your user name and password.

Questions? Call, click or visit us at 920-846-2816 or www.ocontoelectric.com.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Streaming content with electronic equipment that has earned the ENERGY STAR® rating will use 25 to 30 percent less energy than standard equipment.

Source: energy.gov



BUSINESS SHOWCASE

OCONTO ELECTRIC'S RADIOSHACK



It all started with an idea that Oconto Electric should get into the cell phone business. In 1999 the co-op was looking for ways to increase margins to help keep electric rates as low as possible.

After creating a business plan, the CEO found that the co-op would only have to do about three phone activations a month to break even. With the approval of the board of directors, OEC began a journey into the fairly new phenomena of cellular phones.

The first month co-op employees did 30 activations, and the numbers increased each month after that.

It soon became apparent there was not enough room at the co-op office to handle all of the new activity. The CEO did some research and found that purchasing a RadioShack franchise would make sense, and then the Cellcom sales could be moved there also. And so, after much planning, Oconto Electric's RadioShack opened in October 2000.

People in the community continue to support the store and help our business grow, so much, that we moved into a larger location in 2014.

"We continue to pride ourselves on our superb customer service. We take the time to train the customers and make sure they are comfortable with their product before they leave the store," said Robin Banaszynski, manager of OEC services.

Looking for a place to mail a package? RadioShack does UPS shipping. "We handle prepaid drop off, or if you bring the package in ready to ship we will process the label and get it out the door for you," said store manager Stachia Desterheft.

RadioShack carries computer accessories, ink cartridges, flash drives, SD cards, radios, smart home products, tablets, wireless phones and accessories, wireless speakers, Popsockets, and so much more!

RadioShack is located in the Highland Square Mall, 323 E Highland Drive, Oconto Falls, WI. Phone: 920-848-1234. Store hours are Monday through Friday 9 a.m.–7 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

If you have suggestions for businesses that are on OEC's power lines, please email kjagiello@ocontoelectric.com or call Katie at 920-846-2816.

HIDDEN ACCOUNT NUMBERS

Oconto Electric Cooperative hides two account numbers in the local pages of the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* each month. If you spot your account number, call our office before you receive the next issue, and OEC will give you a \$15 credit on your electric bill or a \$25 credit if you have a load management receiver. The March account numbers belonged to Patrick Mcnerney, Oconto Falls, and Jeanette Slang-Kootaka, Suring.

Byron C. Nolde, CEO

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Katie Jagiello, Editor



Grandma Millie's Carrot Cake

Submitted by Katie Jagiello, OEC Employee

2 cups flour
2 cups sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
3 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon salt
Mix it all together. Stir in
1 1/2 cups vegetable oil
Then add
4 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
Mix it all together and add
3 cups of grated carrots
Bake at 300 degrees for 45 – 60 minutes.
Let cake cool completely then frost with cream cheese frosting.

Cream Cheese Frosting

8 oz. cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup butter, softened
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 lb. powdered sugar (4 cups)
Beat all until well blended and fluffy.

If you have a recipe that you would like to share, please email kjagiello@ocontoelectric.com or mail it to Oconto Electric Cooperative, PO Box 168, Oconto Falls, WI 54154. If your recipe is printed, you will receive a gift.

